

Commissioners Meeting Minutes April 11, 2005—Special Meeting

The Randolph County Board of Commissioners met in special session at 4:00 p.m. in the Commissioners Meeting Room, County Office Building, 725 McDowell Road, Asheboro, NC. Commissioners Holmes, Frye, Kemp, Davis and Lanier were present. The purpose of this meeting was to hear presentations from Handy Sanitary District (Handy) and consultants regarding the historic courthouse and to award a contract for new financial and human resource software.

Handy Sanitary District Presentation

David Townsend, III told the Board that through Asheboro City Manager John Ogburn he had learned that Handy Sanitary District is interested in a joint effort with Asheboro to supply water to the southwestern part of Randolph County. He said that Handy had hired Hobbs, Upchurch & Associates to do a feasibility study regarding the establishment of a southern Randolph County water system. He introduced Steve Talbert, Handy General Manager.

Steve Talbert introduced Tim Loflin, Handy Board Chair, and Norman Hunt, Board member. He said that Handy was established in the mid-70's with their first water line being constructed in 1976. He mentioned that Handy's accountant was Steve Scarborough and their attorneys were Jon Megerian and Frank Wells, both of whom were present at this meeting.

Fred Hobbs distributed information packets regarding their preliminary feasibility study. This packet also contained maps outlining 3 possible options to approach water system construction:

Option 1: Southwest Randolph County with interconnection to Handy Sanitary District at intersection of NC Hwy. 49 and NC Hwy. 109

- bulk water purchase from City of Asheboro
- 65 miles of water mains (2" through 12")
- one 150,000-gallon elevated water tank
- control valve/PRV station and master meter
- 1,150 potential customers at 85% participation
- \$350 per tap (initial) (18 houses/mile)
- anticipated average daily water demand—200,000 gallons
- total project cost--\$9.0 million
- average monthly water bill = \$60.68
- potential clients: Farmer Elementary School, Holly Bluff Campground, Oak Hollow subdivision (s/d), Farmwood s/d, Meadowdale Acres s/d, Asheboro Country Club, Label Line, McDowell Lumber Company, Denton Hardwoods and at least 10 poultry operations along NC Hwy 49.

Option 2: Southwest Randolph County, no interconnection with Handy Sanitary District

- bulk water purchase from Asheboro
- 58 miles of water mains (2" through 12")

- one 150,000-gallon elevated water tank
- control valve/PRV station and master meter
- 1,124 potential customers at 85% participation
- \$350 per tap (initial) (19 houses/mile)
- anticipated average daily water demand—200,000 gallons
- total project cost--\$7.7 million
- average monthly water bill = \$55.22

Option 3: Southwest Randolph County, Water Service to intersection of NC Hwy 49 & Old NC Hwy 49

- bulk water purchase from Asheboro
- 38 miles of water mains (2" through 12")
- one 150,000-gallon elevated water tank
- control valve/PRV station and master meter
- 904 potential customers at 85% participation
- \$350 per tap (initial) (24 houses/mile)
- anticipated average daily water demand—150,000 gallons
- total project cost--\$5.4 million
- average monthly water bill = \$50.49

Mr. Hobbs said that construction of the proposed project would fall to Handy, not the County. Unless the County Commissioners decide to put the issue up for vote on a bond referendum, the County would not incur any debt. Mr. Hobbs said that possible funding sources are State Revolving Loan Fund, Certificates of Participation, NC Rural Center or the US Dept. of Agriculture-Rural Development funds.

Mr. Hobbs said that the next step would be to conduct surveys and community meetings over a 6-month period. Citizens would be given the opportunity to sign-up for water service at that time. Next, if interest and need is verified, would be a 6-month design phase. Finally, a 12-18 month construction phase would commence. Mr. Hobbs suggested a \$350 tap-on charge for citizens who sign up in the first 6 months with a higher rate after 6 months but before construction is complete. He said that it generally costs around \$1,200-1,500 to tap onto an existing line. Early estimates indicate a \$60 per month minimum bill for customers.

Mayor David Jarrell and City Manager John Ogburn said that they would be willing to work with Handy, Mr. Hobbs and the County on the feasibility of this project. Mr. Ogburn indicated that the estimated figures regarding the cost of the water seemed low and would require a great deal of study.

Chairman Holmes said that the Board would consider this further at a later date.

At this time, the Board took a 5-minute recess.

New Financial and Human Resources Software Presentation and Award of Contract

Deputy Finance Officer Jane Leonard made a PowerPoint presentation about the entire bid and selection process in choosing a new financial and human resources software package that would replace our old, outdated PIC system. Seven proposals were received; these bids ranged from \$313,772 to \$1,079,521. Two vendors, GEMS and New World Systems, were short-listed, and site visits were made to Georgia to visit local governments that were using these software solutions. Ms. Leonard discussed all the pros and cons identified by the team of four (Jane Leonard, Lisa Walker, Diane Mitchem and Tom Wassack), who made the site visits. As a result of the visits, Ms. Leonard recommended New World Systems. The contract price including the 20% discount (if contract is approved in April 2005) is \$395,300. Another \$39,700 (estimated) will be required for hardware and operating system needs. She said that there are sufficient funds to cover this expense (\$400,000 encumbered funds earmarked for this purchase and \$35,000 in funds that have been saved over a two-year period).

On motion of Kemp, seconded by Frye, the Board voted unanimously to approve a contract with New World Systems for the purchase of Financial Management and Payroll/Human Resources software in the amount of \$395,000, authorized the County Manager to execute the contract and approved Budget Amendment #39, which transfers the funds set aside for this project out of Contingency and into Computer Services' budget, as follows:

<i>2004-2005 Budget Ordinance General Fund Amendment #39</i>		
<i>Appropriations</i>	<i>Increase</i>	<i>Decrease</i>
<i>Computer Services</i>	<i>\$ 400,000</i>	
<i>Contingency</i>		<i>\$ 400,000</i>

At 6:00 p.m. the Board recessed until 7:00 p.m.

Presentation of Consultants' Reports on Historic Courthouse

Bill Moore, museum consultant, gave a report on the feasibility of developing a history museum in the old Randolph County Courthouse. He said that the 1906 building would be suitable, after substantial renovation, to house county artifacts and would probably draw more tourists to Randolph County. He suggested using the main level for temporary exhibits and rented office space and the upper level, formerly Courtroom A, would be used as the main museum. The smaller rooms behind Courtroom A could serve as either storage or to house temporary exhibits. The basement could be used for storage and artifact preservation and restoration. He mentioned that the elevator, although in good condition, would not be adequate for museum use because it is too small. He also mentioned the possibility that the Randolph Room, currently housed in the Public Library, could be relocated to the basement of the old courthouse. Mr. Moore suggested that the building be evaluated annually for water damage and while adequate parking space is not a problem at this time, this issue should be evaluated every 5 years or so. He also provided his vision of the types of exhibits that could be placed in the museum, such as historical and geographic wall murals of the county and an actual small log house or covered wagon. Mr. Moore concluded by saying that this museum could easily become one of the finest museums in North Carolina.

Dean Spinks, architect, gave a report on the practicality and cost of preserving the old courthouse and giving it back a productive life. He said that while the building is structurally sound, there are some things that need to be addressed, like reinforcing deteriorated mortar joints to prevent further weather damage. Almost everything on the interior needs to be repaired or replaced, including the windows, doors, stairs, plumbing, heating/cooling systems, wiring, flooring, wall surfaces, ceilings and ventilation systems. He also said that the toilet facilities are inadequate. Mr. Spinks recommended sealing off the balcony in Courtroom A largely due to the stairway leading to it not being code-compliant. He said that the new metal roof is in good condition. Also, he found a great deal of asbestos floor coverings and said that the plaster on walls and ceilings needs to be tested for asbestos content. Any asbestos found would have to be professionally removed.

Mr. Spinks recommended a 3-phase plan for renovating the building. Phase 1 (estimated cost \$1,696,000) would fix most of the structural issues and would make the main floor occupancy-ready. Phase 1 would also include a new 2-story wing containing toilet facilities and a large elevator that would be handicap accessible. Phase 2 (estimated cost \$484,000) would make the second floor ready for occupancy. Phase 3 (estimated cost \$340,000) would renovate the basement level. The total estimated cost is \$2,520,000. Mr. Spinks said that his estimates do not include furnishings, telephone or data systems or any special museum exhibit construction or storage systems.

Richard Wells thanked the members of the Historic Courthouse Study Committee for their work. When asked what the operating budget of such a museum would be, he compared this proposed museum to Davidson County's historical museum, which is also located in their old county courthouse. Davidson County's museum operates with 2 full-time and 1 part-time employees and a \$250,000 annual budget. He mentioned the possibility of hiring an experienced curator up front before any construction commenced. This person could seek grant and private foundation funding and develop fundraisers for exhibits to help offset costs.

Bill Ivey also spoke in support of this project.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the Board adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

J. Harold Holmes, Chairman

Darrell L. Frye

Phil Kemp

Robert B. Davis

Arnold Lanier

Cheryl A. Ivey, Deputy Clerk to the Board